



FACT SHEET

Salmonella infection (Salmonellosis)

❑ WHAT IS IT?

Salmonellosis is an infection of the intestines caused by bacteria called *Salmonella*.

❑ SYMPTOMS

Symptoms usually develop 6 to 72 hours after consuming infected food or drink. Symptoms typically last 4 to 7 days and can include:

- ✓ Diarrhea
- ✓ Stomach cramps
- ✓ Headache
- ✓ Fever
- ✓ Vomiting
- ✓ Dehydration (fluid loss), especially among infants and the elderly

❑ HOW IS IT SPREAD?

- ✓ *Salmonella* bacteria leave the body in the stool. Persons infected with *Salmonella* can pass the bacteria to others if they do not wash their hands well after using the bathroom.
- ✓ A person can become infected with *Salmonella* by:
 - Eating food or drinking water or milk that has been contaminated with *Salmonella* bacteria.
 - Touching infected animals and then eating or touching the mouth without washing hands first. Infected animals often do not appear sick. Animals commonly infected with *Salmonella* include chickens, ducks, pigs, cows, rodents, and reptiles such as snakes, lizards, and turtles. Pets are a common source of infection.
 - Eating ready-to-eat foods (foods that don't need to be cooked) that have been prepared with utensils, or on food preparation surfaces contaminated with *Salmonella*.

❑ DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT

- ✓ *Salmonella* infection is usually diagnosed by a stool test.
- ✓ Most people recover without treatment. Antibiotics are sometimes used for people with severe illness. Antibiotics may also be helpful for young infants and people with certain chronic medical conditions such as cancer, sickle cell disease, HIV infection, other immune system problems, and chronic gastrointestinal disease.
- ✓ Drink plenty of liquids to prevent dehydration.

❑ PREVENTION

- ✓ Wash hands with soap and warm water after going to the bathroom, changing diapers, touching animals, and before eating or preparing food.
- ✓ Cook all meats thoroughly—particularly poultry.
- ✓ Do not eat raw or undercooked eggs.
- ✓ Drink only pasteurized milk.
- ✓ Refrigerate food promptly.
- ✓ Disinfect food preparation surfaces, cutting boards and utensils after each contact with raw meat by wiping or submerging in a solution of 1 teaspoon liquid household bleach per gallon of water. Let air dry without rinsing. Prepare fresh bleach solution daily.
- ✓ **People with diarrhea should not work as food handlers, care for children or provide health care. Children with diarrhea should not attend child care or school.**

**Report all King County cases to
Public Health by calling (206) 296-4774.**

Available in alternate formats.